

Message Text

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SUBJ: REF: COLOMBO 2585

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER J.R. JAYEWARDENE'S FIRST PUBLIC ADDRESS TO THE NATION CONTAINED NO SPECIFIC POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS; HE REAFFIRMED THAT THE ASSEMBLY WILL SIT AUGUST 4 AND TAKE UP THE "REVISION" OF THE CONSTITUTION AS THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS. NAMES OF THIS GOVERNMENT'S TOP CIVIL SERVANTS ARE SLOWLY COMING OUT; THEY INCLUDE W.T. JAY-SINGHE AS FOREIGN SECRETARY. AT THE SECOND CABINET MEETING, THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO DRAW UP A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR M.P.'S AND PUBLIC SERVANTS AND APPOINT A COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE CORRUPTION AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A TEN-MINUTE, LARGELY-CEREMONIAL SPEECH TO THE NATION FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE TOOTH JULY 28, NEW PRIME MINISTER J.R. JAYEWARDENE OFFERED NO NEW POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS; THOSE HE WILL APPARENTLY SAVE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH TO THE ASSEMBLY AUGUST 4. HE REFERRED BRIEFLY TO THE POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE, EXPRESSING HAPPINESS THAT IT WAS ENDED. HE VOWED THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD BUILD A NEW SOCIETY BASED ON BUDDHIST PRINCIPLES. ON MORE SPECIFIC ISSUES, HE PROMISED THAT IMPORTS

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OF BASIC NECESSITIES (RICE, FLOUR, SUGAR, MEDICINE, AND TEXTILES) WOULD BE LIBERALIZED WITH PROVISIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO PLAY A ROLE. HE ASSURED THE PUBLIC THAT FAIR PRICE GOODS WOULD NO LONGER BE CHanneled ONLY THROUGH THE COOPERATIVES BUT WOULD BE AVAILABLE IN PRIVATE SHOPS AS WELL. REDUCED PRICES ON SUCH GOODS WERE PROMISED "BEFORE LONG". ANNOUNCING THAT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY

WILL TAKE PLACE AUGUST 4, J.R. SAID THAT THE "REVISION" OF THE CONSITUTION WILL BE THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS.

3. IN THE LATEST APPOINTMENTS TO BE REPORTED IN THE PRESS, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY W.T. JAYA-SINGHE, A 1977 IVP VISITOR, IS TAKING OVER AS SECRETARY OF THE NEW MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; THERE IS NO DEFINIT INDICATION YET WHO WILL ASSUME THE DEFENCE RESPONSIBILITIES. TAKING OVER AS SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF PLANTATION INDUSTRIES IS BRADMAN WEERAKOON, A MUCH-RESPECTED FORMER CIVIL SERVANT WHO RESIGNED LAST YEAR TO TAKE A LUCRATIVE JOB ABROAD WITH THE INTERNATONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION. THE NEW SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING IS SARATH AMUNUGAMA, ALSO A CAREER GOVERNMENT SERVANT, WHO WAS EARLIER DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION. LAKSHMAN DE MEL, FORMER SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, HAS MOVED OVER TO THE TRADE MINISTRY WHERE HE REPLACES JAYANTHA KELEGAMA AS SECRETARY.

4. THE CABINET AT ITS SECONDMEETING JULY 27 RESOLVED TO APPOIT A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO MISMANAGEMENT AND CORRUPTION AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL. THERE IS AS YET NO WORD ON ANY MAJOR INQUIRY INTO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PAST GOVERNMENT. THE CABINET ALSO DECIDED TO DRAW UP A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR M.P.'S AND PUBLIC SERVANTS. A LONG-STANDING DIS-PUTE BETWEEN THE LEGAL COMMUNITY AND THE GOVERNMENT WAS RE-SOLVED JULY 27 WHEN THE NEW JUSTICE MINISTER AGREED TO RETURN UNCLASSIFIED

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THE LAW SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING. THE CONFISCATION OF THE BUILDING IN 1975 EXACERBATED THE HOT WAR BETWEEN FELIX DIAS BANDARANAIKE AND MOST OF THE SRI LANKA BAR.

5. IN THE SPIRIT OF "SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE," MINISTER GAMINI DISSANAYAKE HAS PROMISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER THE LEGALIZATION OF HORSE RACING ONCE AGAIN, PERHAPS FOR A START ONLY IN NUWARA ELIYA, HIS CONSTITUENCY. DISSANAYAKE CITED THE WELL-KNOWN FACT THAT BETTING ON THE LONDON RACES IS WIDE-SPREAD IN THE ABSENCE OF LOCAL EVENTS AND POINTED OUT THE IN-CREASED EMPLOYMENT AND TAX REVENUES THAT WOULD RESULT. PERKINS

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